

IN THE CLAIMS

The text of all claims under examination is submitted, and the status of each is identified. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended): A process of dewatering an aqueous suspension sewage sludge suspension employing a flocculating system comprising

i.) treating the suspension with a flocculating amount of a first flocculant and a dewatering amount of a second flocculant, which second flocculant is in the form of particulates,

ii.) thickening the treated suspension of step i.) by release of free water,

iii.) mixing the thickened suspension, wherein the second flocculant particulates are distributed throughout the thickened suspension of step ii.), using conventional mixing equipment,

and

iv.) subjecting the suspension to mechanical compression dewatering to form a cake, wherein the first flocculant brings about flocculation and assists thickening of the suspension and the second flocculant further deters the suspension,

characterised in that the second flocculant is a water-soluble or water swellable polymer formed from 80 to 100% by weight methyl chloride quaternary ammonium salt of dimethyl amino ethyl (meth)acrylate and 0 to 20% by weight acrylamide of intrinsic viscosity between 3 and 10 dl/g that is mixed into the suspension in the form of a water-soluble or water swellable particulate polymer having a particle diameter of at least 20_50 microns, wherein the first and second flocculants are not counterionic and the first flocculant is cationic acrylamide polymer.

2. (cancelled).

3. (currently amended): A process according to claim 1 in which the mechanical compression dewatering employs an apparatus selected from the group consisting of belt press, filter press, screw press and centrifuge.

4-11. (cancelled).

12. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 in which the first flocculant and second flocculant are added substantially simultaneously.

13. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 in which the first flocculant and second flocculant are combined into a single composition.

14. (currently amended): A process according to claim 13 in which the single composition is a particulate polymer product in which the first flocculant comprises particles having a diameter below 10 microns and the second flocculant comprises particles having a diameter above 20 microns.

15. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 in which the second flocculant comprises polymeric particles having a coating applied to the surface.

16. (original): A process according to claim 15 in which the coating is a silicone.

17. (original): A process according to claim 15 in which the coating is a water-soluble wax.

18. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 in which the second flocculant is introduced into the suspension in form of a slurry in a liquid.

19. (original): A process according to claim 18 in which the liquid is polyethylene glycol.

20-22. (cancelled).

23. (previously presented): A process according to claim 21, wherein the second flocculant is a polymer of intrinsic viscosity between 4 and 10 dl/g.

24-25. (cancelled).

26. (previously presented): A process according to claim 22, wherein the second flocculant is a particulate polymer having a particle diameter between 100 and 800 microns.

27. (currently amended): A process according to claim 1, wherein thickened suspension in step ii.) is a semi solid sludge paste.